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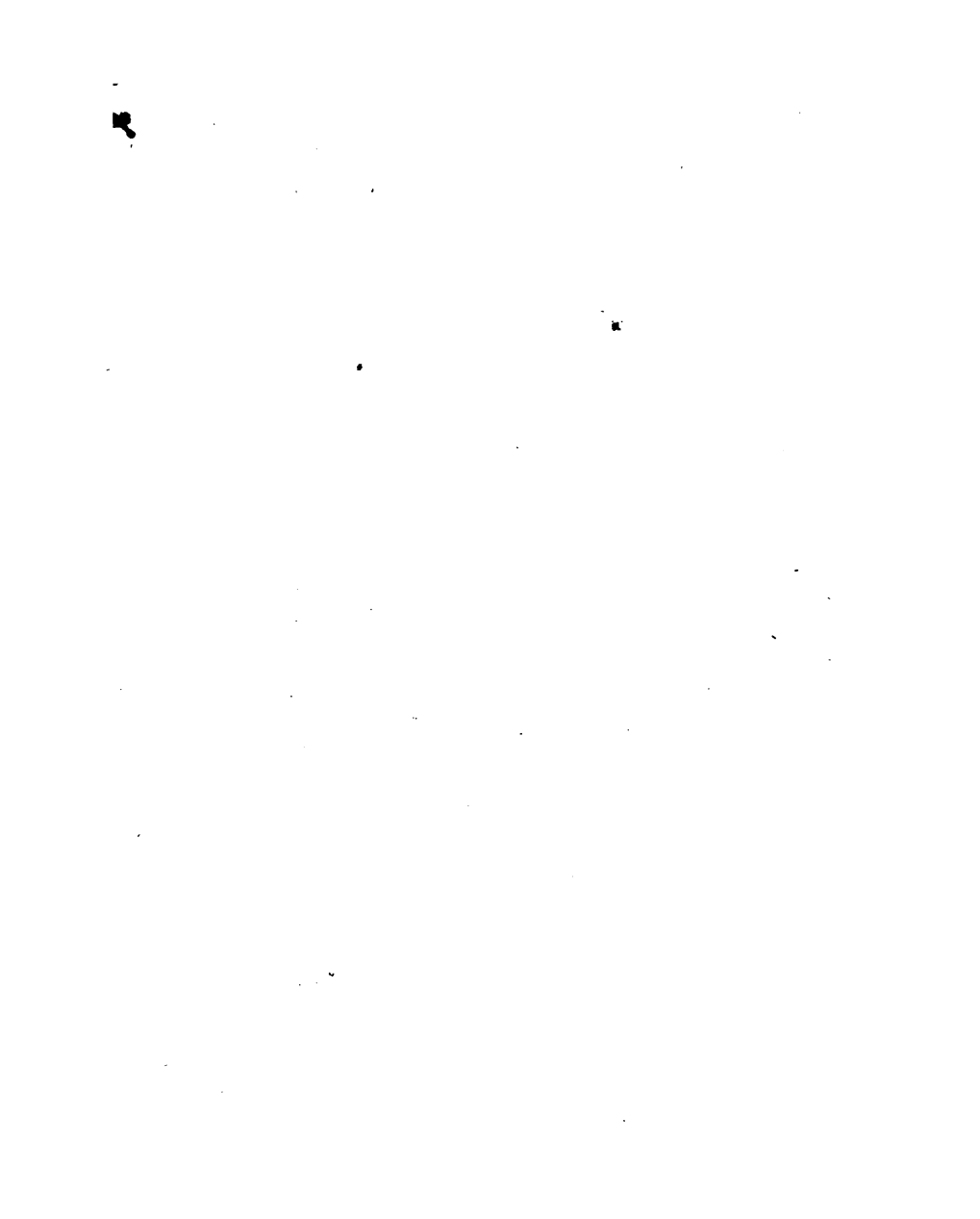
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A COSTLESS CHOIR OF
"VOLUNTEERS,"



A COSTLESS CHOIR OF
"VOLUNTEERS."

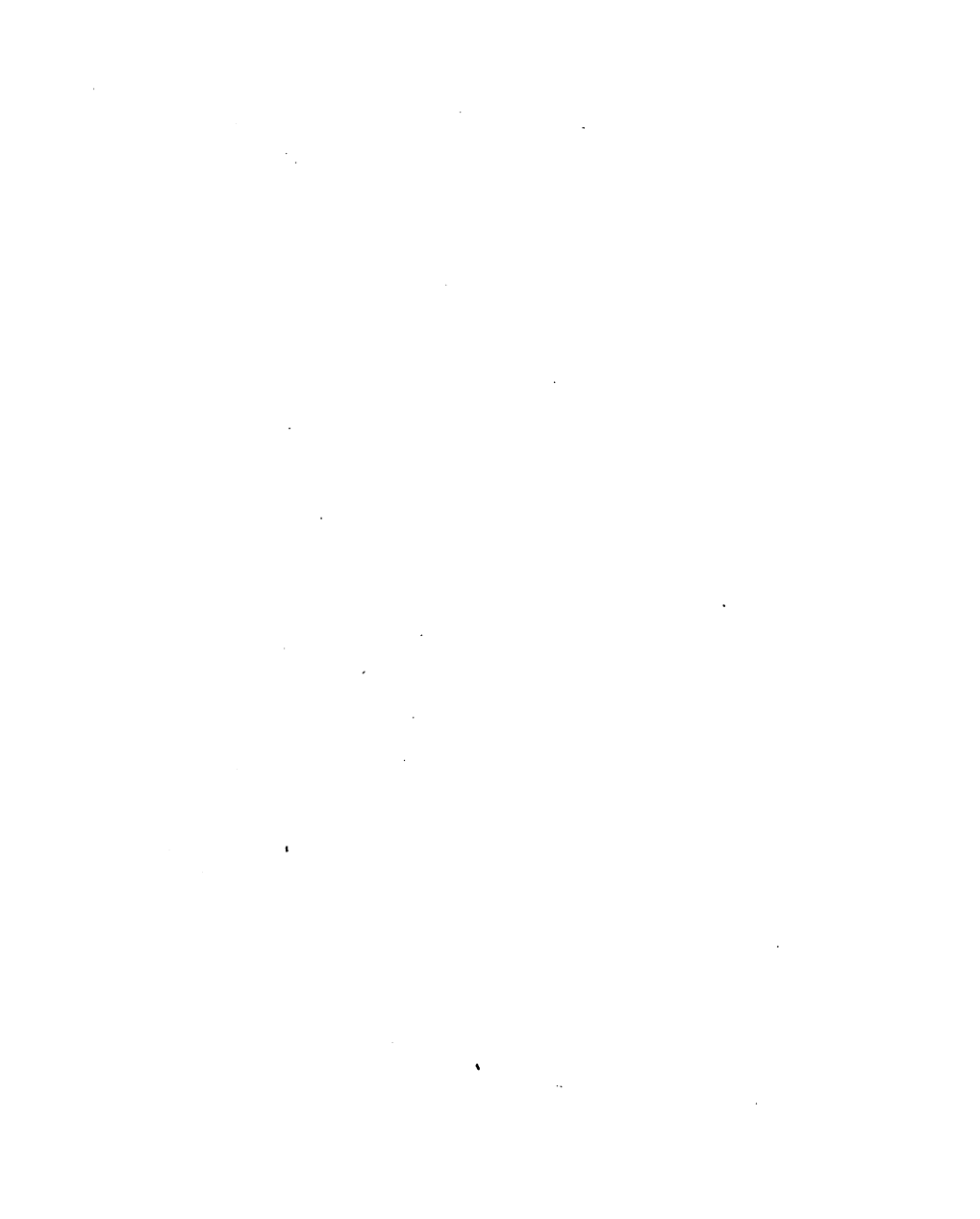






A COSTLESS CHOIR OF
"VOLUNTEERS."





A COSTLESS CHOIR OF
"VOLUNTEERS,"
AND HOW IT WAS MADE
AND KEPT.

"Whoso offereth Me thanks and praise, he honoureth Me."

Psalm l. 23.



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1877.

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I do not wish to attempt to take upon myself to teach anybody how to make a Choir—far less remind them of any duty. I only earnestly desire that in every Church somebody would kindly take the burden off their minister, at least in this sweet work, and would believe that it is *quite* possible to make an almost costless Choir. For one *was* made under what would be considered impossible circumstances, and in spite of difficulties that few would have to contend with, of a peculiar nature which it would be too personal to explain here—and with the most rough, most raw material to work upon—by one who most certainly had no more skill or talent than anybody else who can play a chant or hymn-tune correctly, and who never had a lesson on the organ in her life.

It seems to me—although I feel so very diffident at giving an opinion of such little value—it seems to me that it is *impossible* to have really good singing without great expense, unless you can get a Choir of “Volunteers.” This is my little secret, which is worth its weight in gold to me ; for I have never failed to find “an unpaid Volunteer” is sure to be a “ringing” little piece of metal.

It is quite true that it was never in my power to have paid singers ; but when once I found the value of the

ones I had, I would not have had any others if I could. Is there any comparison between them, and those who are paid to come and sing—who, perhaps, when they come *can* sing by note, and charge accordingly? Some Clergymen pay one man £30 a-year: £10 is not at all an uncommon price. Now even if one has the power to do this, what is the inevitable result? They are too grand to sing only simple hymns and chants; it does not satisfy, it is too simple for them. They soon get restless, unless you introduce Anthems, solos, etc., that the congregation cannot join in. I do not like this in a village Church; it always gives me the idea of singing to their own glory. I never attempted this. I like it very much in a Cathedral, where it is done artistically, and is a pleasure to listen to; but it requires an education, a training, to bring this to perfection. That is scarcely possible in many country villages. I *have* heard Anthems and solos that were simply excruciating. It is a very old custom; and in out-of-the-way and old-fashioned places, where they have no idea of singing, you may still hear the old clerk give out “an Anthem;” but, as I said before, at present we don’t attempt it.

I aspire to nothing but *congregational* singing, as perfect as I can make it—to nothing but the simplest, loveliest chants and tunes I can find, sung perfectly: an easy,

simple chant sung beautifully, rather than a difficult one, imperfectly.

Somebody said to me the other day, "If you have a full body of sound coming from the Choir, no one cares to sing in the Church." Alas, that any one should think so! I have always found exactly the reverse. If the Choir, whose use is to *lead*, and *only* that—if that is thin and meagre, who dares to, cares to join? It is only fair to say that the lady who said this owned that she did not understand music.

I have always felt it most embarrassing in going to a Church where no one sings, except perhaps the Choir. A hymn is given out—"Let us sing to the praise and glory of God," and directly you begin to do what the Clergyman has just invited you all to do, and begin to sing, everybody looks round at you. It is most distressing—in fact, you find yourself singing "a solo," much to your discomfort.

Delicious as it is to *listen* to singing or music, I cannot think that *Church* is the proper place for this; for *there* ought one not to go—not to be sung *to*, but *to sing*?

A full body of melodious sound coming from the Choir inspires the congregation (I have always found), and infuses and distils around a sort of irresistible desire to sing God's praises too; so that very soon the whole con-

gregation join in as with "one voice," and make the very roof ring with the "burst of melody"—ascending upwards, higher, higher, till it echoes in Heaven, I do believe.

No lovely Anthem sung in our beautiful Cathedral by those paid to sing well, that one listens to with such intense delight, is ever more sweet to me than an exquisite hymn sung from the heart by a whole congregation : such as "I heard the voice of Jesus say" to *Vox delecti*, or "I need Thee, precious Jesus," or "Art thou weary?" and many others, sung as if every word were *felt*. I know that sometimes I could have wept to hear them sung, they are so sweet ; and yet I have heard it said, "Oh, those tunes 'don't go' in Church." Why, sometimes at home, when we have them, the dear people say, "I almost felt I was in Heaven." And I am sure I have felt the same ; for are not Holy Angels present? do they not bend their ears to hear His praises sung, and can one take too much pains to give Him the best we have, when Jesus Christ is "listening?"

I do not think one could ever have this sort of singing with boys *alone*. People often quote a Cathedral, where boys sing so well, and say, "There is nothing so sweet as a boy's voice." This is quite true when each voice is cultivated, and taught, and trained *as* in a Cathedral—picked and chosen voices to sing the solos : how can one

compare it? And then in the choruses they have men always. I would have boys, and girls too, if the organist pleases; but some men's voices as well, even if they do not sing tenor or bass. My reasons are two:—

1st. Because, can boys be depended upon alone to lead and guide a congregation? I have heard a great many Choirs composed entirely of boys; and, sweet as their voices undoubtedly are, have always noticed how very flat, and out of tune they get after a few verses. They are too young, and not steady enough in voice, and often too thoughtless to care to keep even in time, always, alone; but a few older heads keep them in time and tune, I have always found, as well as steady in their behaviour during service. I think it terrible to be *entirely* dependent upon boys.

2ndly. However sweet trebles may be—and needful as of course they are—one cannot but observe how thin and meagre a chant or hymn, however lovely, will sound, even in a drawing-room, when several trebles sing it all in unison: but let a bass or tenor join, how rich and full the harmony—how different the trebles sound! it modifies even shrill ones. How much more would this be the case in a Church where, if you have many school-children, as is generally the case (at least in our village we have about 100 children to 500 people), you, indeed, require something more than merely *treble* voices in your

Choir to lead the congregation, especially if the Church is small, or you may hear shrill trebles above everything—organ and all! These are two all-sufficient reasons to my mind.

It is exceedingly difficult, of course, to find “tenors” in a village who can, even with great pains, be taught to sing in tune—at least they are very rare about here. When you *can* find them, how much they add to the beauty and harmony of a Choir, which is almost nothing without them!—although there are very few real tenors.

Then, again, even if you *could* depend on the steadiness and attention of boys alone, to lead a congregation, one must remember that in a village Choir you can seldom get any others but ploughboys; and though of course some of them possess beautiful voices, yet no one who has not tried it, has any idea of the immense amount of teaching and training they require, especially if you teach them, parts; and, worst of all, when you have with a vast amount of labour and pains taught them to sing by note, in nine cases out of ten, they leave their homes just as they begin to be of use to you, and seek places elsewhere, so that you cannot *keep* the boys. Of course music and singing elevate and improve the mind. And I have generally found that the boys who sing best, almost in every case, are no longer content to be ploughboys and plough-

men all their lives, but very naturally aspire to something higher ; and it is well for them that it should be so.

I trust no one will for a moment suppose that I do not admire boys' voices, or like them in a Choir—for we have them as well as men and girls. What I mean is, that among all the Churches in which I have heard boys alone in a Choir, I have never known a single instance in which the above objections do not exist—even in places where they have a professional to teach them.

Had one in a village the power and opportunity of training each voice separately, as they do in a Cathedral Choir, it might be very different ; although, I fear, even that would not keep the boys.

It sounds so strange to me to hear Clergymen, both in the country and in town, say that their Choir is an unceasing worry and expense to them.

I can truly say our Choir at home has never been anything else but an unfailing, never-ceasing source of delight and pleasure to me and to everybody else connected with it—with which my Father, its Clergyman, has never had one atom of trouble, or thought, or care. I could not bear that he should. It seems to me so hard that a Clergyman's mind should be worried with what lies in other people's spheres, and other people's power to relieve him from—at least, the anxiety : so hard that in every Church some-

body could not entirely, wholly, and costlessly relieve him from that which he cannot have time, or strength, or voice to do himself, without making his throat sore for Sunday—by taking the weight of it off his hands, I mean. Not that *any* one but the Clergyman could or should ever be looked upon as the Head, from whom all orders, guidance, direction can only come. I simply mean the methodical management, the working part of it.

It is such a pleasure to be allowed to help in so sweet a work, to be *permitted* to minister in God's Holy Temple, and to be able to do anything for God by helping His Minister in which he need not be called upon to expend his strength. The very pleasure will *more* than repay, however much trouble you may take ; and I can say with truth from my heart (and so can each of my sisters who have taken my place when I could no longer teach them), that never once has any member of our Choir said or done one single thing that we could wish unsaid, undone, or altered—and I am most fastidious. Their whole conduct, attention, behaviour at the practisings, and devout behaviour during service, have always been beyond all praise ; and that, from the first day, years ago, until now : always there, always ready to even leave their work, and come on any extra occasion, at the slightest wish expressed. The very thought of their faithful, long-con-

tinued services, given so willingly and gratuitously, fills my heart with joy and gratitude.

Sometimes people say to me, "This is all very well in a village. You can get them to come because the people among whom you have lived all your life are so attached to you," etc., etc.

Now, although it is quite true that I like everybody in the parish, young and old, rich and poor, to look upon me as a sister and a friend—I should be very unhappy if I thought they didn't—still *that* did not make the Choir, because, with very few exceptions, it was not parishioners only, except the girls, who compose it.

I always, when anybody comes fresh into the parish, go and see if they possess a voice or not; and two or three come from a village a mile and a half off. I would rather they did not, for fear their Clergyman might not like it; but we are the best friends, and I often say to him, "I am so dreadfully sorry, but you know they *will* come." He knows quite well that I would not for the world *ask* them to come out of another parish, or entice them in any way; and he knows, too, that if I did not let them come up and sing in the Choir they would still go and sing down in our Church. A hopeless case; so I let them stay. One reason of this is that they are, some two, and some nearly three miles from their own Church, and ours is much nearer.

- In spite of this, however, I should not feel it right to accept anybody's services out of another Clergyman's parish ; only in neither of the parishes nearest to us they have any Choir at all, but merely the school-children to sing.

Besides this, there are constant changes of farm-labourers, and whole families, amongst those who help to form our Choir—more frequent changes than there could be in a town, where most certainly it would be almost impossible to have the discouraging circumstances under which this Choir was made.

Ours was almost like a heathen village (I have often heard my Father say) when he first went there, having had no resident Clergyman for more than 200 years ; and it is such a secluded place, they had scarcely ever seen, much less spoken to, a lady. I could not be particular if I would, so I had to take any Voices I could find, regardless of ignorance or pronunciation, and not think of any drawbacks : or no Choir could have been made. I had some of the roughest, rudest, most uncouth, untamed, to teach ; and I was but a child myself when I began.

There was everything to begin, organize, and train, within and without. When I, after much hesitation, begged my Father to let me try and get some men to sing, he was so astonished that he refused, saying that it was quite im-

possible, for unless he were always there they would be quite unmanageable ; in fact, it would be absurd *my* attempting such a thing. I was not disappointed : I did not expect it would be allowed, as my Father said it would be a great expense to set up and keep up such a Choir. So, in almost despair, I went to the daughter of a neighbouring Clergyman, who played the organ, and had a very good Choir.

She told me that it would be impossible to get tenors and basses to come and sing for "nothing." "Even if you get them," she added, "you will not keep them ; we have to pay our singers handsomely—both the men and the girls—or they would soon leave."

Quite in despair now, I went home, and thought "Everything is against me." But as I am not writing a history of myself, but of the Choir, I will not dwell any longer on the difficulties I had to wade through, surmount, and overcome ; and, my own self, I cannot even now understand "how it all came to pass," except that I know that nothing is "too hard" for God, and He knew I could not have a Choir that cost anything, or made any expense, and so He let me have a costless one.

At last I obtained consent, and joyfully began to do that for which I had so longed.

My Father strongly objected to girls as well. "Either

one or the other," he said ; " but both will never do—and it is so far for the girls to walk home at night after practising, and very lonely."

These were such very good reasons, of course, that I did not know what to do ; but as I promised they should always be taken care of, and seen safely home, in the course of time I was allowed to enlist young women, girls, boys, and men ; the elder and most respectable of whom took the greatest care of the younger, and saw them safely home. In fact, the Head of our Choir, the Village Blacksmith, a " Volunteer" of many years' service, has been its stay and support, and the greatest help and comfort from the time that he joined us. I feel that he is indeed quite beyond all praise.

Our dear old churchwarden, my Father's right hand, used to come up and help us, with his bad grammar and pronunciation, but such a soul for music ! He is gone to Heaven now : an unspeakable loss to us in every way.

Some of those I had, could not even read correctly. None could read a lovely hymn, much less pronounce it as I like it pronounced. I know, too, I had some of the most violent tempers, whose cruelty in their homes—wife-beating, etc. (Ah ! I cannot speak of it) : but as they offered themselves, and were so anxious to come, I

thought, "It will bring them to Church, and *may* reform them," for music, beautiful music, has power to tame even a savage.

Yes, and so it did. Their wives and mothers tell me how it keeps them at home and amuses them after their work is done; and I need no one to tell me how it softens and refines them.

The way I get them to come is very simple. I once read a little book, in which I found a "little way," called by a wise man "The art of *putting* things." I hear of a Voice—I don't mind who possesses it, however uneducated or untaught, but it must belong to an irreproachable character, of course,—go and say to it, or to its mother, or wife, or sister, not "Will you come and join the Choir?" for then they will be almost sure to refuse, saying, "I can't sing," and "I should be ashamed before the others," and two or three other objections; so I say, "God has given you a voice, a beautiful voice. I know you cannot sing, but I am sure you would like to learn. Come to Church, and I will teach you. No, no one will laugh at you. You need not sing in Church till you think *yourself* you know the tunes. You, of course, like to come to Church every Sunday. Well, it is not much more trouble to sing in the Choir than to sit downstairs, is it? I think it an honour and a privilege to be allowed

to sing in a Choir ; and don't you think *you* would like to do this little thing for God ? *Do* come and try, just for a month."

Well, the consequence is they always *do* come. I have never once been refused. The reason is very plain. I do not believe God ever gave a voice to any one who would not like to sing if they knew how. Some people do not even know what gifts God has given them. Perhaps you may touch a chord that was never touched before ; perhaps you may awaken a noble feeling that was scarcely conscious of its own existence, so crushed and wounded has it been by the influences of those around it, or by the very force of circumstances—nothing to lift it *up*, everything to drag it *down*.

When I say I would take none but irreproachable characters, I do not mean to say that I should be too strict, or expect perfection in choosing members for the Choir, or reject any one because he had ever been known to do anything wrong, or to take more than he ought, before he entered the Choir.

Men very often go to the public-house in the evening simply because they have nothing else to do. Only the other day a man said to me, entirely of his own accord, " I go there, I know, sometimes, but never to drink ; I goes for 'company,' that's what *I* goes for." I only wish that

they *had* some rational enjoyment after their work is over, for having no resources in themselves, or amusement, or recreation, no wonder the public-houses are full. Of course I do not say this is right, or that it ought to be the case; but who that lives in a country village among "the people" does not know that it is true? But once in the Choir, never have I known one of its dear members, from the first day it was formed, years ago, enter such a place. Never has one of them been known to have on any occasion taken too much, to their honour and pride be it said—although there are five public-houses in our village, most of which they must pass in going to and fro to practise.

When you have got as full a Choir as you wish, it is another thing to *keep* them; and I always feel one ought never to forget they leave their warm fireside, after a hard day's work, to walk in all weathers to practise; and I like to try and make them feel they are wanted, and needed, and very welcome.

A Voice is a very timid thing. A rough word, a look, will drive it away, and shrink one up into oneself all the evening; and until persons can sing, and have confidence in themselves, no one knows how shy and frightened they are. They require to be encouraged and reassured immensely before you can even judge what power they

possess. As for finding fault, I should never attempt it until I had gained their entire confidence. I believe when once this is gained, and when once they feel you thoroughly understand both them, and what you are teaching them, they like—yes, *like*—to be stopped and corrected, and told what they sing wrong. It is perfectly unnecessary to say that the more *gently* they are spoken to, and dealt with, the more they strive to please. I cannot understand it being necessary *ever* to speak to a singer except in the gentlest tone; at least, I myself have always found it so. The rougher they are, the greater the effect of gentleness—by force of contrast, I suppose. Perhaps they hear nothing but rough words at home, some of them. Now I think that one is apt sometimes when one feels a thing intensely, to imagine that other people feel the same, and one may often invest other people with the intensity of one's own feelings, perhaps wrongly, and about things that they are just not feeling at all.

But I have always felt myself intensely that to be scolded *gently* is a thing most *irresistible*; that is, where any scolding is necessary at all—I do not think that everybody *knows how* irresistible a thing it is—instead of being told of a fault, or perhaps accused of something of which you may be wholly innocent (and which you

could easily explain), in a loud, harsh tone, and perhaps before others, your tormentor retiring with a bang of the door, listening to no explanation, and leaving you perhaps for ever a little lowered in the opinion of those who formed the audience.

How often have organists said to me, "How *do* you manage to keep them year after year? Directly I say to any of our Choir, 'You *must* sing in tune,' or 'You *must* come and practise,' immediately they are offended, and often leave the Choir."

I believe the truth is, I don't manage at all. I should feel it was all over with me, if I had to say those dreadful words, "You must." I simply could not use them. A tie is at all times a galling thing, I suppose. A harsh word, a stern command, would make it feel like a heavy iron chain that a strong nature, a man's nature, would long to snap; or, it may be made to feel so very light, so covered with rose-leaves, that it can scarcely be felt. Did anybody ever find that made it less strong?

I try and train their voices as much as ever I can, and show them *how* to sing, and stop them whenever I hear a note the least out of time or tune; but I have never in my life spoken to one of them except in the gentlest tones, and in the kindest way correct them, endeavouring to do it in a way that will not show up the particular faults of

one before the others, or make them even smile ; and never smile myself at any faults, be they never so ludicrous.

I was told a few days ago by a singer in a Choir that costs £300 a-year, in one of the largest towns of England, that many singers in their Choir left constantly because they did not like to be spoken roughly to, or to see the others laughing at them. "In fact, Miss," said this man to me, "the organist did not seem to *understand* them." How true it is that—

" Evil is wrought for want of thought,
As well as want of heart."

And so for want of a little tact, forbearance, consideration, and feeling for the feelings of others, you lose your singers, and certainly could never expect to keep "Volunteers," even if you ever got them.

It is scarcely possible to enter into detail here of the *way* I teach them. Everybody, I suppose, has a different way of doing things ; only of this I am sure : to have any success in either teaching or influencing *anything*, surely you must understand it. By *it*, I mean you must understand the person you are going to teach, as well as the thing. "Misunderstood" is one of the most dreadful, heart-breaking words. "*Tout comprendre, c'est tout*

pardonner" is a dear little French truism that translation would spoil.

Very soon one finds a Choir will become as dissatisfied with their performance as their teacher would be, unless it is quite perfect ; and delight in stopping *themselves*, and asking to sing it over and over again. This they would do fifty times—even one bar—if I would let them. They take such a pride in doing their very best. They would be ashamed and distressed to make a mistake before the congregation.

I am sometimes accused of thinking everything I like "perfection." I do not quite own that ; but to put it another way, nothing really satisfies my mind that I undertake until I have done everything that could be done to make it as perfect and complete as it is in my power to make it. I do own to a love of completeness ; and it is quite extraordinary—and incredible too, to any one who has not tried it—what *may* be done even with the roughest, most untaught voices, as well as uncouth manners.

I have scarcely ever been able to get any thoroughly good voices, simply because they do not exist in this place. We have never had more than two, ever since the Choir was first formed, who, if they sang a solo (which is not allowed in our Church) would really be a pleasure to listen to ; and yet, all together, in time and tune, and

with hearts tuned to sing God's Praise, and trying to do their best to lead the congregation, any one would be astonished at the effect ; and everybody who comes to our Church admires the singing, and likes it—not that they hear many splendid voices, for, alas ! we don't possess them, and a really beautiful voice is as rare as it is beautiful. I often think if only one were in a town, and had a *choice* of voices, how exquisitely lovely one might make the singing.


However, to show that it is not only myself who admires and enjoys our simple village singing, when our late, kind, dear Bishop held a Confirmation for the first time at our Church for all the Churches round, my heart went pit-a-pat at the very thought of what the Bishop and his Canons, and Chaplains, and all the people who came would think of our very simple village singing ; for full choral services, anthems, etc., are now quite common in many of our villages. What was my amazement and delight when the Bishop came up to me after the Confirmation, and said “he had never heard singing in any Church in his diocese which pleased him more, or was more to his mind,”—adding, “It was really quite delightful to hear the Choir and the whole congregation join together as with one voice. Why did you not let us have twenty verses of that hymn, instead of only eight ? It

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was so beautifully sung ; it could not have been too long." I knew he meant all he said : I could see in his kind, sincere face how pleased he was—and a little bit surprised too.

Very soon after, the Bishop's dear wife and mother came over to call, and asked to go to the Church for me to play the organ to them, and said how pleased the Bishop was. How very kind of her to come over, merely to say a few words of encouragement to me—sometimes so sorely needed !

Another great encouragement I had. When the dear old Squire of my Father's other parish, three miles from us, built a pretty little Church there, and was expecting the Bishop to come and Consecrate it, having a wretched Choir, not fit to sing on such an occasion as a Consecration, instead of hiring one from our Cathedral town close by, he asked me to come, and bring our Choir, and play the new organ, and lead them. The Choir and myself felt it a very great honour to do so—how we practised !—and though it was a long, trying service, and we chanted everything, and it was a strange new organ, and Church, and people, yet they sang it all perfectly ; and notwithstanding that the dear, good Choir of "Volunteers" had walked three miles, uphill nearly all the way, and had to meet the procession of Bishop, Chaplains, and Clergy




down at the churchyard gate, without any music, or me, or anyone to lead them, and to set off themselves, on meeting the Bishop, a chant to the 24th Psalm, "The earth is the Lord's," etc., all this I was told by everybody they did perfectly. Long before anyone else told me so, I heard their voices in the distance coming nearer and nearer, and one glance at their faces was enough, as they came into the Choir, every one of them looking up at me with delight, as much as to tell me they had done it as perfectly as they knew I wished them to do it. It *was* an ordeal, and a very formidable one, to set off a chant, and head such a procession.

One of the Bishop's Chaplains (now a Bishop himself I am happy to say) was so pleased with the way they sang, and always took such a kind interest in our Choir.

These were indeed encouragements; and I can never, never forget how it cheered and comforted me, for I had weary, uphill work, more than I could get through, and sorely needed help and comfort. Not that the Choir were an atom of trouble to me—a thousand times no! Not once have I ever been even ruffled in the smallest degree by anything that happened there; never once have I seen even a shade on the face of one of them: but, you see, to set up at first, and begin, and organize a new Choir, one wants books, and tunes, and chants, and to teach

them to sing by note, etc., for which one requires a little money—and I had none; so that it was very brain-wearing copying out every tune and chant for a whole Choir. But they could not rest till they had everything we sang copied out to take home and learn; and we were always of course learning new things. I could not buy the books, and had too many other duties at home and abroad to know how to find the time to copy out everything, except late at night,—and then how to get the money every year to pay the blower I really did not know, and could never bear to *ask* for help.

Of course, in parishes where the Clergyman is rich, and able to afford it, and has both time, taste, and inclination to teach the Choir himself—as some may like to do—it is all very well, and very easy; but this is very rarely the case. Very often his wife or daughter undertakes both to play the organ and teach the Choir; but whether rich or poor, you almost invariably find that the whole weight, burden, and expense are thrown upon them. And though the people are delighted to come to Church and hear nice singing, yet I fear that in the majority of cases, be their ears never so pleased, they do not know the immense amount of labour and care, and never-ceasing energy and activity required, as well as health and strength to keep all this up. Perhaps it never enters into their



most distant imagination how much they might help—for every one might help “a little”; and if each member of the Church who loves to hear good singing would just see what they could do, and try and assist “a little”—it is so easy for *many* to help *one*—if each one would take a little interest in this good work, and if they could do nothing more, would give a “very little sum” annually towards it, it would not be such a strain upon those whose health and strength are spent upon it; for though the little history of this Choir is all quite, quite true, yet it costs a great deal of needless waste of strength to make a costless Choir, *when* the whole falls upon only one, and that one is the organist and teacher and leader of the Choir. Not that the members of the Choir cost anything (did I not say that they were “willing Volunteers”?) ; but there must be little expenses connected with it, such as books to start with; or the organist has to copy out each tune and chant, and its parts for a whole Choir—treble, alto, tenor, bass. When one constantly has new tunes, this is no small labour. Of course, when a set of books is once bought, they will last for years, until the tunes are become out of date, if such a thing can be: with some tunes, I think, *never*.

Also, it does not seem right for singers to be expected to come to a damp, cold, fireless Church. Still less

should it be expected that the Clergyman ought to pay for this. I know we used to practise for years without a fire; but I would earnestly recommend no one else to try it, or they may have a lifelong repentance. I never would again ask a Choir to practise in a cold, fireless Church. Then there is the blower to be paid, a most important, indispensable personage. In a country village a boy or girl can easily blow on Sunday, and on the practising nights (only get a strong one); of course where there is daily service, or in a town where people are richer, and where the strength of a man would be required to blow, it would be just as easy, for there would be *more* to help.

A charcoal-burner or little stove warms a gallery or organ-loft nicely if only lighted in the afternoon of the practising day, and it really costs a trifling sum; so that these, after all, are small expenses: divided amongst a whole congregation it would be nothing.

If each one would "offer," "volunteer," to assist the "Volunteer" Choir, and "Volunteer" Organist in every parish, how delightful it would be.

A very small annual subscription or "offering" would be all that was needed.

I think that if everybody in a parish could only feel that they really are "what they are"—members of the

Church—they would soon feel how great good they might be to themselves, as well as to others, by upholding and strengthening the hands and the work of their Clergyman, and that it is everybody's duty, as well as pleasure—lay as well as clerical—to assist.

I have always felt most keenly the sad pity it is that lay help is not universally sought after. It would soon be found. There it is—"the great need" and "the great supply"—and yet for want of method, organization, and training, not made use of, not taken up.

It is, I feel sure, not the fault of the lay members of the Church—they are only too ready to help when asked. I should be sorry to say it is anybody's fault; but there lies the broad fact. The need of some *organized* way of doing this, and the *not* taking up, and using all those who *feel* they wish to do something for God and giving them something to do, is I truly believe (and know in numerous instances) one of the *chief* causes of dissent.

Many cases I have known in which people, especially the very young, when they leave the school, also leave the Church, and join the Dissenters, merely because *there* they have some work given them to do for God, and are taken up, and helped to do it: a most praiseworthy though not sufficient reason, drawn into a wrong direction, with sad life-long consequences.

One case that especially distressed me was that of a young man who, though much too ignorant to *teach* others, left the Church and went about preaching; and told me himself that he felt completely changed and desirous of leading a good life ever since his Confirmation, as he was deeply struck by the way his Clergyman had taught and instructed him; but after his Confirmation, finding no one to help or teach him, and nothing to do for God, he left the Church, which had been the means of his reformation, and joined dissent, *merely*, he told me, because *there* they gave him some work to do for God, and helped him to do it.

I know some Clergymen do not feel the necessity of it—do not make use of it, except by constantly asking the people for money, which sometimes they weary of. There are hundreds of other ways in which people can and would love to help, if they only were taught how. Yet I have constantly heard Clergymen say, who have preached and ministered for years and years—twenty and thirty years—in one place, when things in which they require help, sympathy, assistance, or advice are brought forward, “Why, the people do not uphold me, do not seem to take any interest in this, do not help me to carry it out; their hearts are not in the right place; they do not see it is their duty.”

This reminds me of some very-much-to-the-point lines which I read the other day, on what the writer called "The empty husks of abstract speech :"—

" For invitations to the ' right '
Can never shape the righteous thing ;
In ' abstract calls ' to truth and light,
The parishes are perishing."

I cannot help longing to see universally in our dear Church of England, in every village, that which is so much more general in towns—lay help—every one, each individual, feeling that he or she has a personal interest in every good work or object, in everything that affects or concerns the Church, and that there must be, and is, something that each can do, be it ever so little. There are the stones—some large, some very small—lying scattered abroad ; but where is the building ? They only need to be taken up and used—each one put into the place for which it is most fitted. We must not try to make a "round" fit into a "square," nor give people work for which they are unfitted ; but each one is fit for some use for the Master-Builder—cemented together, each stone in its place, by a heavenly union of kindness and love to each other. Nothing would be impossible then. The dear people need to be taught it—the heart, and mind, and soul, trained to seek for it and find it, and to feel it is a delight as well as an individual duty.

This is, I know, taught, and carried out in many places, and I bless God for it.

Though my heart is so full of this much-to-be-desired unity, I must forbear; for out of its abundance I fear I have said too much. To return to my last remarks about the Choir.

It went sadly against the grain, receiving all their faithful and devoted services for nothing. So, without saying a word to them, I went round and asked all the "gentry" (as they call them) in the village if they would not like to give a trifle each to make a little present to the Choir at Christmas. A terrible part of one's duty this asking—it takes more out of me than almost anything; but somebody must do it. And very often one feels it is a much-against-the-grain duty one ought not to try and avoid.

How kind the people were—and how warmly they responded to my wish—and how delighted was I to have a little present, small though it was, to offer the Choir!

They were very much pleased, for some of them were—oh! so very poor; and although they came and served as Volunteers, and would never have asked for any sort of payment, yet they came so often on "extra" occasions, and so often when they might have been working and earning common necessities for their children, that I

could not bear the thought that I might be taking up one single hour of such precious time: coming to practise so nicely dressed in all weathers—so many miles, many of them—often so wet, and going home with perhaps nothing scarcely to eat. One man in our Choir has a wife and eight children to support, and only nine shillings a week; and constantly takes only a piece of bread away with him in the morning to last him for the whole day—heart-breaking fact! Were I to write a little sketch of his patient, uncomplaining sufferings, it would scarcely be believed.

One can bear hard work; but it is when one's sympathies are so touched and stirred, with no power to relieve—it is this that tears one to pieces.

In spite of the poverty of some of them, they actually had the nice feeling to say they did not like me to do such a thing for them; and yet so touching was their gratitude I was quite overcome.

Then I said, "Suppose (D.V.) next Christmas you all go round and sing on Christmas-eve to these kind friends; and I won't *ask* anybody to give you anything."

They did so on the following Christmas-eve; and the dear people were so delighted at being serenaded in this way, that they asked them into their houses, and gave them money; and though I know they are offered spirits and anything they may like to drink, at most of

the farmers' houses, and are out nearly all night—their Christmas-eve extending far into Christmas morning—to their honour and pride be it said, they come on Christmas morning to sing in Church, having had scarcely an hour's rest, weary and hoarse ; but never, oh ! never, in one single instance has one of them ever been known to have taken too much—not even those who never before were known to resist such temptation.

Now they know something better.

Such is their love for music and interest in their Choir, that nothing has kept them away—no bad weather, rain, frost, snow—always there at the practisings. One man comes from a racing establishment over the Downs two miles off, over one of the darkest, bleakest, most hilly plains in England. No fire, no warm Church, to welcome them.

It was something new to the Churchwardens and people, and they thought it quite enough expense to have a stove lighted on Sunday ; but to provide us with a fire for our practisings, never entered into anybody's most distant imagination, as far as I know.

After a long time people began to think it must be “rather cold” for us to practise in a damp, cold Church, which has had no fire in it all the week ; and now, we have a little charcoal-burner for Friday evenings up in

the organ-loft ; but not for years did we have any sort of fire.

It was so damp and cold sometimes that the notes of the organ were quite wet, and in a few minutes one's fingers were almost frozen. Often in a severe winter the cold was so intense that a warm Shetland veil had a fringe of icicles hanging from it when it was freezing hard.

The consequences of getting so thoroughly chilled very often—and how bravely they bore it!—are not easily forgotten.

Never can I forget the feeling of relief and gratitude, and how I was touched, when the kind farmers' wives and daughters presented a harmonium to me and my dear sister who helped me, that we might not get so chilled, but have the Choir in our own hall to practise ; though of course that was not for years after we began.

When I look back now, and think of all that they endured from intense cold, I often wonder how they could ever have sung at all before, or come to practise.

But such was their delight and pride in coming, that they were not content to only practise once a week on Friday evenings ; they begged me to meet them on Sunday afternoon as well, which I really was not at all willing to do, as I thought that their coming so far three times on Sunday was too much—besides being not at all good for

any of our voices or throats. And though I was much touched by their unselfish devotion to such a good cause, I could not bear to accept so many hours of service on their *only* day of rest. But in spite of all that I could say, there they were, every Sunday afternoon, even if ever so wet, utterly regardless of any weather. I always found them waiting for me till I came out of the school at half-past three ; then we sang till nearly tea-time.

But we have given up this extra practising now, for it was almost too much to go on from seven in the morning till nearly eight at night every Sunday—at morning and evening service to play the organ and lead the singing, attend school twice, morning and afternoon, and then to practise singing after afternoon school.

Now, of course, Sunday is not a proper day to practise or teach a Choir music—at least, I mean *I* do not think that it is ; and lest any one should misunderstand, let me explain that I never gave them a lesson in music or taught them singing on that day as I did on Friday evening. We merely sang over all our hymns and chants that were to be sung at that Sunday evening service, and after that, any favourite ones they asked for or wished to sing, and though I should not think it right to choose Sunday for a regular practice, I think there can be no more harm in a Choir singing together on God's day than there is in

a whole family singing sacred music together elsewhere on that Holy Day.

At least I know I felt it to be a great comfort to think they should *wish* to spend their Sunday afternoon in such a way ; so entirely different to what they had done before, and that *could only* do good to them.

It was wonderful to me that they could ask such a thing, considering what a distance some of them came, some two miles, every one a mile or more, except two of the girls, yet they walked all these miles *three times every* Sunday.

I mention this to show that a Choir will put themselves to any inconvenience if they are taught to love music, and are interested, and feel they improve every time they practise, and are made to feel how much they are needed, and what a help they are, or I do not think they would volunteer to walk so many miles three times every Sunday. I could not bear to feel how much it was taking them away from their homes and families.

This seems to me to be the one only single drawback : that they cannot sit with their wives and children, and worship together in God's Holy Temple ; but I do not see how it is to be avoided, and I used often to comfort myself by repeating those beautiful lines of dear Longfellow, in his " Village Blacksmith : "—

A Costless Choir of Volunteers,

“ He hears his daughter’s voice
Singing in the village choir,
And it makes his heart rejoice.
It sounds to him like her mother’s voice
Singing in Paradise !
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes
A tear out of his eyes.”

I have never found, even after years of service, that they get restless and dissatisfied if they are not allowed to sing Anthems and solos in Church, as an organist told me the other day his Choir was ; and many organists have before made the same complaint to me.

I constantly endeavour to impress upon them that we must only sing to the glory of God, and that He will *accept* our services if we offer them out of pure and single-hearted devotion to Him alone, and only wish them to lead and guide the congregation, and not sing to our own glory or wish to do as they do in a Cathedral, and sing Anthems and solos.

Far, far be it from me to say that this ought never to be done ! Still I am quite aware of the fact that a Choir would not be satisfied, and might after a time, when the novelty wore off, perhaps cease to care to come, if they did not feel they were always learning something. So I think a good plan is—at least, I have found it so—to let them learn by degrees, when first they come, to sing in

perfect time and tune all the tunes and chants. That will take a long time ; and one is always learning some new chant or tune.

It is a great thing to teach them modulation, and when and what to sing soft or loud—to make them thoroughly understand the meaning of *forte* and *piano*, but to have no “shocks” in music: I mean not to “die away” to nothing, then suddenly almost scream out the next verse of a Psalm in chanting.

Extremes meet ; and instead of hearing that very slow, drawling, monotonous kind of singing that was the fashion in days gone by, sometimes it seems as if we have gone to the other extreme. When the tunes are sung at a “galloping” pace, it is impossible for a whole congregation to follow. Quick time is certainly better than slow, but it must be moderately quick ; and it requires an ear and taste for music, to sing words to the tunes that are most suited to them. It is by no means enough that the metre is the same, nor that solemn words should be sung to a solemn tune, and joyful words to a lively one ; more than this is necessary. It is terribly disappointing sometimes to buy a book of tunes and hymns that have been highly recommended to your notice, and then find that in many instances the rhythm and accent of the poetry would be altered and spoilt were you to attempt to sing

it to the tunes (beautiful though they may be) to which they are set.

Beauty without "expression" lacks its chief charm : and can there be any expression in words that one is obliged to accent wrongly ?

When a dear, good, unmusical Clergyman, who perhaps objects to "Hymns Ancient and Modern," wishes in all kindness to edit a book of tunes to suit the hymns he has compiled for the use of his own flock and others, *would* that he would call in the aid of some poetical friend to assist him in a task which certainly requires a little poetical as well as musical talent. It is not "enough" that a tune and hymn are both common metre ; a good deal more is needed, or to some ears it may sound "peculiar metre."

I have found it a very good plan to practise without an instrument during a great part of the practising, as then one can so much more easily detect inaccuracies. It may be difficult to find out who is singing out of time or tune, if you *always* use an organ or other instrument the whole time. Of course one must give the key-note, &c. Some people say a piano is best to use for practice ; but it is not always possible to have one, and I have always found an organ assist greatly. I do not like a harmonium at all, it is not responsive enough to one's touch. Also, when you find the happy combination of organist, teacher, and

leader of the Choir all in one, and he or she sings over the parts in teaching—treble, alto, tenor, bass—over and over again with those who cannot quite master it, to help them over the difficulty, such teachers may be glad of a little rest from playing *as well* all the time; such persons not having, perhaps, much “superfluous energy” to get rid of; for it is difficult to listen, and sing, as well as play the organ.

I do not like teaching a Choir before an “audience.” What I mean is, some Clergymen, kindly intending to “help” the organist, sometimes ask a good many ladies and gentlemen to come up and help, to which they kindly respond. Now, if they have good voices, and intend to come and learn the tunes in order to come and sing during service, it would be a great and kind help; but unless they intend to do this I would rather, as far as I am concerned, that they did not come at all, because, their singing at the practisings alone is no use, unless they sing in Church as well, and only makes the Choir timid and more difficult to teach; for they are very shy of strangers, especially as new-comers generally sit opposite, and look at them all the time (which I never do in teaching)—to say nothing of the shyness of the poor organist, for it is not at all pleasant teaching and correcting and stopping a whole Choir, and singing a part

over and over again before an audience, especially if they all understand music—as, much that one must do, and hear, and bear, at such times and seasons, must needs jar and grate on musical ears. So let others do as they may : for my part I am much too shy to teach a Choir before an audience.

I know that there are some people who hold a sentiment—happily fast dying out, I really hope and believe—viz., that it is dangerous to make the singing too beautiful and attractive, as it is very wrong to attract people by anything that pleases the ear or eye ; and one often hears such persons say, in a reproachful way, of a Church in which great pains have been taken with the singing, “ Why, the Church was so beautiful, and the singing so lovely, it was more like a Roman Catholic Church than anything else.” Now, the way such expressions as these take effect, and frighten people, and deter them from joining or helping to make the service of God worthy of His acceptance, would be incomprehensible to me, did I not know, I grieve to say, many well-meaning but mistaken persons, who, as our “ Mentor ” Bishop most exactly and appropriately expresses it, “ sniff Romanism ” in every flower, and think every one “ far gone ” on the road to Rome who loves to make the singing in our dear old Church of England as beautiful as it can be made. Because those

whom we hold to be in error sing, and sing well, are we therefore to murder lovely hymns and chants, thereby jarring and irritating the nerves as well as the musical ears of all who come to our Church, and (as I know to be the case) preventing many people from coming, who say they cannot listen to such "excruciating" attempts at singing? I know many young men, who have an ear and soul for music, who positively do not go to Church, in some places, where they have their ears offended thus; and I know that that is the real and only reason that keeps them away.

Now, I do not say (far be it from me to hold such an opinion!) that this is right, or that every one ought not to go to Church, bad singing notwithstanding; but I merely state a fact—though an inconvenient one, I fear.

On the other hand, supposing that simple, beautiful singing does attract—although that is not the right motive for coming—who can tell what effect may not be produced by the very singing of beautiful words? I think it is Canon Ryle who says something of this kind: "Beautiful thoughts clothed in poetry are more likely to dwell on the mind and be remembered; when the same words in prose would have long since passed away, and made no impression." Do we not feel that most mysterious power of music to touch the heart and mind? to soften the

hardened? and does not the beauty and harmony of singing help to excite piety and devotion in the public worship of our God? and is not the deepest and most solemn expression of adoration and thanksgiving to Him true worship and praise? and *who* can tell what good may not be derived from the rest of that beautiful service, and perhaps beautiful words from its minister, by coming that very day, and attending that very service? and can there be any beauty, or any enjoyment in *anything* where there is no harmony?" All arguments to the contrary notwithstanding, I cannot but think it very wrong, and very displeasing to God, that any one should be kept away by anything that offends in His service. To any one who thinks I make too much of this sweet part of our beautiful service, let me say, dear friend, I feel most intensely the tremendous responsibility of "talents,"¹ the fearful warning given to those who make no use of the talents God has bestowed upon them, the exceeding great and rich reward offered to all those who make a "right use" of them, and use them for God's glory. Whatever gifts God may have given us, offered to Him in a right spirit, He will accept: He will abundantly bless.

¹ According to their meaning given in St. Matthew xxv., not meaning merely "talented" people, but that there is something each and every one can do for God.

Who can read the Psalms of David, and not see how full they are of words that show how God loves to hear His people sing praise to Him? "Yes, even from the mouth of babes."

How much we read in the Bible about "singers," and "praise to God"! I know we are not under the Jewish dispensation, and are not bound by what they were commanded to do; but surely the things God loved in their time, He loves now. And I could never be deterred from making singing as beautiful as lies in my power, and trying to make others do the same, by the fear that the "love of the beautiful" in these days is a dangerous thing. It is the abuse of any beautiful thing, any good gift, that is wrong—not its use. "Why should not every sense be made auxiliar to Divine"?

I only wish to put singing in its proper place; and although I know that my opinion is of little value, yet I always feel it matters so little, what some, who "care for none of these things," may say about "what these things *may* lead to."

I like my hand to "do with all its might" whatever my heart tells me is right to do, even though only two or three helped me.

I am often cheered and helped by the lines:—

“It is brave to dare to speak
For the crushed, oppressed, or weak ;
It is brave to dare to be
In the right with two or three.”

There always will be people who look on the dark side of other people's undertakings ; but I have a very firm and unchanging belief that God will *help* and abundantly bless all those who wish only to draw out all that is noble, pure, and true in others, and use it in His service.

As for it being a “drudgery” to teach a Choir, and “requiring the patience of Job,” as some people think, to me it is *no* drudgery, but a sweet pleasure, which does not require the exercise of any Job-like patience, as far as my small experience extends. And is not the result more than an ample reward for any pains or trouble we may take ?

Some say they would not take the trouble of teaching a Choir their notes, but would only take those who already know them. Then you may reject many lovely voices ; and you will find that when once you *have* a Choir, and some *can* sing by note, it is wonderful how they will help on one another : even our poor ones each get some little instrument, take the tunes home, and teach themselves a great deal. And I think that this is no small part of the good that comes from having a Choir ; it shows them a sweet, happy, useful way of spending their evenings.

But let no one think that it is altogether an easy thing to make and keep a costless Choir, or that you will find no difficulties in the way (especially under some circumstances, or if you have to displace one already there—however inefficient it may be), for indeed you *may* find many obstacles in your way, as a beautiful writer most truly says—“Let any one try and begin *any* good work, and very likely they will find either incredulity as to your competence in such a matter, or a sort of repulsion at your efforts; and even *sometimes*, the more clever and well-informed your objectors are, the more decided may be their opposition.

“You may have to contend against the twofold obstacle of resistance to novelty, and dread of innovation. All novelty is *primâ-facie* suspicious—none but the young welcome it; for is not every new discovery or new truth looked upon as a kind of slur on the wisdom of those who overlooked it, or preceded you?” Or how often does opposition proceed entirely from jealousy, which is strong as death! Prejudice, too, oh, what a barrier it is sometimes—a firmly-seated, deeply-rooted thing, which no power can shake, or move, or change! And sometimes so *blind* that it refuses to even *look* at anything that it is predetermined to dislike, whatever may be its merits, and however genuine or intrinsically good may be the object to be attained.

So you see there is *great* need of patience—patient waiting. You may have to wait, and wait, and wait, and hope against hope—a long weary waiting perhaps—until those who resent the idea of any improvement may at last come round.

Is it not well also to remember that in any work we undertake, we should endeavour to do it entirely for the *work's* sake, and for the love of *it* alone ; and keep our eye *steadfastly* fixed on the *end* to be gained : not on any *reward* we may hope for, or expect in this life, either from appreciation or approval, which *we may* never find ?

But let not this discourage us, or make us weary and faint in our minds, or think it unfair, *even* if others reap the reward of our labours.

For by the universal law of inheritance we do not think it unjust that we inherit the scientific knowledge of all those who have preceded *us* ; that we inherit all the advantages of the genius and labours of those master-minds whose whole lives have been spent in discovering, or inventing, or applying, or in mastering some great truth or law.

The advantage of all this toil, this labour, this wealth, which we sit down and enjoy, may have been toiled for and acquired at the cost of perhaps health, strength, and even life itself of some beautiful soul that has gone before

us. Ah ! and perhaps lived and died unknown and unnoticed, its labour of love unrecognized, even though it has paved the way so smoothly for us ; for is it not by the inheritance of *thought*, as well as by the material products of industry, that we have arrived at the present stage of civilization ? Others have laboured, and we have entered into their labours. They have had to bear the burden and heat of the day, and all the rough and stormy days, and brave all weathers.

“ It is easier to walk along a road than to *form* that road.”¹ So it is a comparatively easy thing to step into and carry on any work that has once been planned, begun, organized, and put in train by another ; for in a short time it becomes almost an institution, and would be as difficult to displace as it was to form, *after* it has become popular through public opinion, so intensely conservative are the mass of people, taken as a whole one with the other. So we ought to rejoice if we can be used as a means of *either* beginning, carrying on, or finishing whatever we see the need of around us ; or *if we can do nothing more*, suggesting perhaps to another what we may not have time, strength, or power to carry out ourselves.

Some there are who, while brimming over with energy,

¹ Cecil.

love, zeal, and all those qualities which command success, with the noblest and purest purpose endeavouring with all their heart, and mind, and soul, and strength to carry out some great or good work, may find that it is not permitted to *them* to do this thing.

Then if we are not ourselves allowed to obey that voice of God within us, spurring us on to noble deeds, let us not be *silent*, but suggest it to another.

“ When duties unfulfilled remain,
Or noble works are left unplanned,
Or when great deeds cry out in vain,
On coward heart, and trembling hand.—

Sort thou the tangled web aright,
Take thou the toil, take thou the pain,
For fear the hour begin its flight,
While right and duty plead in vain.

Arouse him then, this is thy part,
Show him the claim, point out the need ;
And nerve his arm, and cheer his heart,
Then stand aside, and say “ GOD speed ! ”

Smooth thou his path ere it is trod,
Burnish the arms that he must wield ;
And pray, with all thy strength, that GOD
May crown him victor of the field.

And then I think thy soul shall feel
A nobler thrill of true content
Than if presumptuous, eager zeal
Had seized a crown for others meant.

And even that very deed shall shine,
In mystic sense, divine and true,
More wholly and more purely thine
Because it is another's too."

What a wonderful, powerful, magical thing is influence !
What a subtle, indefinable thing is *unconscious* influence !
Its power over those who sympathize and agree with us
is tremendous ; and there *is* such a thing as *unconscious*
influence even over those who do *not* agree with us, and
may appear to have nothing in common with ourselves ;
and though they would perhaps resent the idea of it, they
may, and often *do*, *unconsciously* grow to see the need of,
and help forward, or even *do* those very things to which
at first they were so bitterly opposed.

How often one feels that when a great mind is deeply
impressed with the truth of the subject it is discussing, a
certain sense of it radiates from him unconsciously, and
affects and influences all those who come within the sphere
of that powerful and magnetic mind, completely as it were
saturating his hearers with the truth of his subject. For
when a person is completely saturated with anything,
those who are near must expect some tiny drops to fall
upon them.

Does not truth bear its own impress ? and is there not
something most irresistible in all that is genuinely true ?

“ Have we not all amid life's petty strife,
Some pure ideal of a noble life
That *once* seem'd possible? Did we not hear
The flutter of its wings, and feel it near,
And just within our reach? It was, and yet
We lost it in this daily jar and fret,
And now live idle in a vain regret.
But still, *our place is kept*, and it will wait
Ready for us to fill it, soon or late.
Since good, though only thought, has life and breath,
God's life—can always be redeem'd from death.
And evil, in its nature, is decay.
And any hour can blot it all away.
No star is ever lost we once have seen,
We always *may be* what we might have been.”

I believe one can scarcely over-estimate the immense amount of good, to all around, of a well-ordered little faithful band of “Volunteers,” to come to Church to sing God's praise. I speak feelingly, and from my own happy, happy personal experience: not only have we found them a blessing to the Church and parish, but it gives them the little recreation they so sorely need after a hard day's work, keeps them at home, and makes “sweet evenings at home,” perhaps unknown before. *Who* could be cross, or use rough words, who spent his evenings in learning lovely hymns and tunes? It provokes a kindly feeling, helps to kill pride, and brings classes together, to unite in the sweetest, holiest work; makes a sweet union and

communion, of which there is so little in the dear, dear, cold Church of England ; and last, not least, it thins the public-houses and places where men *will* go if they have nothing to keep them at home—a comfortless home, it may be, nothing to make it attractive, nothing to amuse their minds. No one *can* live to themselves. Like links in a chain, each one touches the next link, and that the next. Such is the magic of influence : link added to link may form one long chain begun on earth to continue in Heaven for ever and ever ; so is every word that is ever whispered ; it is never lost. Like a pebble dropped into the ocean, making circles round and round, growing larger and larger till they reach the shore, so is the influence of music, sacred, beautiful music : it begins on earth, its echoes are heard in Heaven. It can never, never die ; it is immortal ; it will live for Ever and for Ever.

“ For music is Heaven,
And Heaven is music.”

THE END.

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